



UNIVERSITATEA
PEDAGOGICĂ DE STAT
ION CREANGĂ
DIN CHIȘINĂU

ȘTIINȚĂ ȘI EDUCAȚIE: NOI ABORDĂRI ȘI PERSPECTIVE

MATERIALELE CONFERINȚEI ȘTIINȚIFICE INTERNAȚIONALE

21-22 martie 2024

Seria XXVI

Volumul 1

ȘTIINȚE SOCIALE ȘI COMPORTAMENTALE

Chișinău, 2024

Recomandat pentru publicare de către Senatul Universității Pedagogice de Stat „Ion Creangă”
din Chișinău la ședința din 20.06.2024, Procesul-verbal nr. 14

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**RESPONSABILITATEA PENTRU CONȚINUTUL MATERIALELOR PUBLICATE
LE REVINE ÎN EXCLUSIVITATE AUTORILOR**

DESCRIEREA CIP A CAMEREI NAȚIONALE A CĂRȚII DIN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA

„Știință și educație: noi abordări și perspective”, conferință științifică internațională (26; 2024; Chișinău). Știință și educație: noi abordări și perspective: Materialele conferinței științifice internaționale, Seria 26, 21-22 martie 2024 / coordonare științifică: Diana Antoci, Silvia Chicu ; colegiul de redacție: Maria Vîrlan [et al.]. – Chișinău : [S. n.], 2024 (CEP UPSC) – . – ISBN 978-9975-46-943-2.

Vol. 1: Științe sociale și comportamentale. – 2024. – 400 p.: fig., tab. – Antetit.: Universitatea Pedagogică de Stat "Ion Creangă" din Chișinău. – Texte : lb. rom., engl., rusă. – Rez.: lb. rom., engl. – Referințe bibliogr. la sfârșitul art. – [100] ex. – ISBN 978-9975-46-944-9.

159.9:37(082)=135.1=111=161.1

Ș 85

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Tipar executat la Centrul Editorial-Poligrafic al Universității Pedagogice de Stat „Ion Creangă” din Chișinău,
str. Ion Creangă, nr. 1, MD-2069

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GENDER TRANSFORMATION OF VIEWS FROM BABY BOOMERS TO GENERATION Z

TRANSFORMAREA DE GEN A VIZIUNILOR DE LA BABY BOOMERS LA GENERAȚIA Z

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CZU: 159.922.2:305

DOI: 10.46727/c.v1.21-22-03-2024.p199-208

Abstract. The purpose of the study was to identify the common and distinct dominant (concepts) of two major generations based on egalitarian and traditional gender ideology – representatives of Baby Boomers (women and men born in 1946-1964) and representatives of Generation Z – students (girls and boys born in 1996-2010). The methodological basis of the first stage of the psychosocial study was built upon the ideas of psychological differences between generations, which were presented in the book «Generations» published by American scholars Neil Howe and William Strauss. The authors argue that individuals within a single generation (men and women) are united by common values, gender-role behavior, including skills, competencies, and etiquette, along with gender differentiation. We also relied on contemporary research in gender psychology, particularly regarding the influence of traditional paradigm pressure of femininity and masculinity concepts dominating throughout the lives of the Baby Boomer generation and its disruption by the current research in gender psychology on androgyny productivity and the interchangeability of gender roles in all spheres of private and social life. Specifically, it was the feminist ideas and gender balance that started to be assimilated by the younger generations, particularly the so-called digital Generation Z. Generation Z is characterized by the daily use of the Internet, YouTube, mobile phones, SMS, and MP3 players, which allowed to describe them as the digital generation. It is known that the nature of equitable, fair gender attitudes determines the democratic development of modern society and gender equality policy in all spheres of human existence, especially regarding women in the 21st century. We were interested in how deeply gender equality ideas have penetrated into each of the different spheres of human activity – education, upbringing, professional aspirations and career development, political and ideological views, and even fashion in the representations of the two generations – older adults and younger adults according to Erickson's age classification of developmental stages. Our pilot study revealed significant differences between the two gender mentalities – traditional for the majority of baby boomer generations, especially for women, and

quite liberal, egalitarian for Generation Z, especially female students. Baby Boomers adhere to ideals and a real assessment of any public events to a strict bipolar distribution of gender roles and consider the technological information boom the main negative factor that has defined the cognitive dissonance of youth with the traditional gender scripts of many generations of adults throughout their lives. For them, the lack of a bipolar distribution of family and social roles is unacceptable. The traditional bipolar roles of men and women are characterized by emotional and cognitive support, while the interchangeable gender life roles, especially in entrepreneurial ambitions and new views on life are considered derivatives of the influence of mass media, which propagates peculiar romantic same-sex relationships, pop culture of money, a new perception of global events. Hence, the fascination of youth with new technologies, artificial intelligence, new visions of gender and sexuality. Baby Boomers consider the strict bipolar distribution of gender roles a revolutionary order of organizing family and social life, and the technological boom as a destructive factor that undermined the centuries-old roots of society organization, including distrust toward the experience of the older generation with their traditional gender scripts throughout life.

Keywords: gender attitudes, generations, Baby Boomer, Generation Z.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres once said that it would take at least another 300 years to achieve gender equality in the world.... But looking at the psychological development of gender conscious of a new generation one may do not accept even more short period for radical transformation mass gender progressive consciousness. As all authors of the article are working with the university students we had decided to look more precisely at the youth gender erudition and dominative views on changing the traditional gender issues dominated at the society.

When planning our research, we wanted to prove that there is a great gap in gender psychology in views and behavior among young generations and older people, generation of their grandparents. Another scientific idea was grounded on the persuasion that the distance between traditional and gender psychology distance can be significantly accelerated by our common efforts to promote gender studies through mass media by enlightening especially aging generations, by promoting better gender knowledge of women studies through feminine pedagogy education.

As a matter of fact, the war situation in Ukraine and the appearance of refugees of older and younger generations abroad, their common settlements (students and their grandparents altogether in academics) made it possible to conduct some discussions concerning different gender issues and to record them, especially during some “psychological fighting and accusation the opposite side” of bipolar vision of gender issues. The below-presented material was gathered and recorded while conducting some sessions, preparing some collages dedicated to some gender matters, and organizing some focus groups on some urgent gender topics. So, the first task of the research through the dialogs, discussions, and opposition’s of some focus groups was to identify the content of the social gender knowledge which are presented in mass media and is oriented on gender enlightenment of men and women of new and old generations. The main attention was paid to the ways of identifying and understanding actual gender matters as progressive or regressive (for example, gender equality or inequality in payment between men and women for the same job activity) in the life span of two generations younger and older.

The second purpose of the study was to identify the common and different visions of two major generations of egalitarian and traditional gender ideology – representatives of Baby Boomers (women and men born in 1946-1964) and representatives of Generation Z – students (girls and boys born in 1996-2010). For that purpose, we used a heuristic technique of gender

content which activated the focus groups discussions while accepting the proposed innovations to change gender prescriptions or rejecting so-called gender innovations. Mostly student focus groups consisted of mixed 5-7 boys and girls and sometimes only from one sex belonging. Focus groups of retired persons mostly had gender mix characters with a prevalence of women. We should especially note that nobody from our teachers team, either Ukrainian or Polish have expected such interest to discussions of gender matters which we had observed with later understanding that interests to gender behavior had served a kind of psychological defense mechanisms protecting from negative traumatized events in the war.

The methodological basis of the first stage of the psychosocial study was built upon the ideas of psychological differences between generations, which were presented in the book «Generations» published by American scholars Neil Howe and William Strauss [12]. The authors argue that individuals within a single generation (men and women) are united by common values, and gender-role behavior, including skills, competencies, and etiquette, along with gender differentiation. We also relied on contemporary research in gender psychology, particularly regarding the influence of traditional paradigm pressure of femininity and masculinity concepts dominating throughout the lives of the Baby Boomer generation and its disruption by the current research in gender psychology on androgyny productivity and the interchangeability of gender roles in all spheres of private and social life. Specifically, it was the feminist ideas and gender balance that started to be assimilated by the younger generations, particularly the so-called digital Generation Z. Generation Z is characterized by the daily use of the Internet, YouTube, mobile phones, SMS, and MP3 players, which allowed to describe them as the digital generation [10; 14].

It is known that the nature of equitable, fair gender attitudes determines the democratic development of modern society and gender equality policy in all spheres of human existence, especially regarding women in the 21st century. We were interested in how deeply gender equality ideas have penetrated into each of the different spheres of human activity – education, upbringing, professional aspirations and career development, political and ideological views, and even fashion in the representations of the two generations – older adults and younger adults according to Erickson's age classification of developmental stages. The first part of our study was devoted to understanding by young and older generations the basic domains that had been used by UNO for the estimation of gender equality or inequality in general for all the countries or called general gender jurisdiction. We asked the members of two age groups to identify the most important gender issues by answering such questions as: What are the key evidence (indicators) for female and male equal rights and opportunities? We had proposed to get equated with the main categories of the Gender Index of Equality (or Gap Index): longevity of men and women in a country; Statistical symmetry of indicators in social functioning of men and women; Equal emotional well-being of men's and women's population; Equal social activity of men and women; Non existing glass ceiling effect; Depending of personality career development only on professional demands not on sex belonging; Promoting equal rights and opportunities for both genders. We should say that neither the old group generation nor the young generation did not pay attention to the main indicator of seeing x well-being function as statistical symmetry [1; 2; 6].

The other problem question was to identify the main domains of gender symmetry measurement and characterize their importance for manhood and womanhood, either young or old. It appears that younger generations are more educated in the life and social spheres, which

include The Gender Equality Index. Students during the prolonged discussions but had managed to identify six of these domains as work, money, knowledge, time, power, and health. Money: inequalities in financial resources and the economic situation of women and men. gaps in earnings and income, as well as the risk of poverty and income distribution. Students, without any hesitations, successfully commented on the accent of gender discrimination in the level of pension representatives by “weak gender” have been engaged in professions with more low salary as nursing, teaching, service, etc. While higher money (pensions) for their work profession had received male emirates because of more financially prestigious job activities in their working age period.

When the students were talking about education and knowledge, there was a dominant idea that their generation is lucky as there is no limit for boys and girls to enroll in certain fields of study, no restrictions on the education of girls in police, computer, military and naval. That is, the fields of education, security, and defense sectors have become accessible to women, and their percentage there is growing every year. The older generation estimated with criticism radical changes in mass consciousness concerning the availability of all gender similar professions. They with more skeptical attitudes perceived availability for to work women in police or in naval forces with arguments such profession may negatively influence reproductive women’s health. Rather small quantity of men students skeptically estimated the real data that almost 40% percent of young men are working in Scandinavian kindergartens as nurses and feel happy in a such job position. These students oppose their accusation as affiliation to their gender stereotypes [5; 8; 9].

Gender individual happiness had been as well the subject of group discussions: who are more happy men or women in their retirement period was addressed to older people and students – why according to a lot of psychological youth studies, girls are less happy in comparison to their male peers? The results of the discussions also have been connected with the problem of gender inequality in housekeeping for men and women in the retirement group, where women calculated the nonpayment hours for the household and lacked possibilities for the rest for women in comparison to husbands. For young generations, the problem of unhappiness has been discussed in the dimension of more attention to women’s bodies and appearance as factors that may determine as lower self-esteem in growing up or with eating disorders as a reaction to dissatisfaction by the own concept of the self.

The main cognitive dissonance in understanding and interpretation of gender issues determined the question for two focus groups of listeners: Why is the concept of violence situated separately and not connected with the main in the UNO list of the main domains for estimation of gender equality? The focus group of youngsters tried to persuade the opposition of older generation that in times of their youth years the gender equality was considered atavism and not an understandable concept. That is why gender violence toward women was widely spread at home or in the working place as sexual harassment. That is why until now in Equality Index still remains that violence concept for the younger generation it is really past perfect times. The point of view of the older generation was based on arguments that still, until now time family violence is widely spread, especially under the alcohol influence and a lot of money the states direct for creation services for victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence. And as well the war had caused the enlarging the people with of those with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)

and other mental disorders increased. And a person transferred all this to his family. That is why indicator violence is important as for women as for men.

Our pilot study revealed significant differences between the two gender mentalities – traditional for the majority of baby boomer generations, especially for women, and quite liberal, egalitarian for Generation Z, especially female students. Baby Boomers adhere to ideals and a real assessment of any public events to a strict bipolar distribution of gender roles and consider the technological information boom the main negative factor that has defined the cognitive dissonance of youth with the traditional gender scripts of many generations of adults throughout their lives. For them, the lack of a bipolar distribution of family and social roles is unacceptable. The traditional bipolar roles of men and women are characterized by emotional and cognitive support, while the interchangeable gender life roles, especially in entrepreneurial ambitions and new views on life, are considered derivatives of the influence of mass media, which propagates peculiar romantic same-sex relationships, pop culture of money, a new perception of global events. Hence, the fascination of youth with new technologies, artificial intelligence, new visions of gender and sexuality. Baby Boomers consider the strict bipolar distribution of gender roles a revolutionary order of organizing family and social life, and the technological boom as a destructive factor that undermined the centuries-old roots of society organization, including distrust toward the experience of the older generation with their traditional gender scripts throughout life.

We conducted our conversations with grandparents and their grandchildren in Poland (based on dormitories for displaced persons from Ukraine) and partially in Polish higher education institutions with students, teachers, or staff (service personnel) in the form of personal interviews and in face-to-face pairs (older and younger, or she is the grandmother and he is the grandson); overall, in the form of small and medium focus groups, gathered either in the educational institution or in the dormitory in recreation rooms by personal individual invitations and phone messages. The content line of questions for discussion for students and elderly people was printed and distributed for discussions or individual oral responses in advance. In most cases, the discussion of the same questions took place separately among the young and the elderly with an outspoken illumination of the opposite side's position, and the dominant thoughts and attitudes were sometimes voted on to support or reject the expressed position.

Our preliminary research found significant differences between the two gender mentalities from the very beginning – traditional for most “baby boomer” generations, especially for women, and quite liberal egalitarian for Generation Z, especially female students. Generation Z is characterized by everyday use of the Internet, YouTube, mobile phones, SMS, and MP3 players... and the rejection of bipolar distribution of social roles with emotional and cognitive support, interchangeable gender life roles and concepts – in entrepreneurial ambitions, new progressive views on everything – from information to romantic relationships.

The gap in gender attitudes of the two generations is particularly vivid in the vision of gender principles of the family institution's functioning. According to students of both male and female genders, Cohabitation is one of the proofs of trust and equality between the sexes, based on mutual respect and gratitude, the individual's aspiration for partnership, which is free from stamps in the passport and prescribed marital duties. Generation Z sees cohabitation as proof of personal maturity, heterosexual reverence, and celebration of the highest levels of informal partnership. Cohabitation as an informal institution is based on the equality of two gender

concepts of Self, which share the main value ideas of higher education, manifestation and revelation of one's psychological potential, closeness based on a conscious evaluation of the available professional and educational potential. These arguments were used by young couples during discussions "for" and "against" unofficial marriage. In responses to critical remarks of the older generation: "Which gender will be in a more dangerous situation in case of pregnancy?" the overwhelming majority of young women did not operate with the category "women - may find themselves" or the vulnerable psyche of a girl, unlike similar arguments of the "baby boomers" generation. The focus of Generation Z was always on the concept of "We, as a couple," and "She" and "He" were always used in the speech of the older generation during their criticism of "modern forms of intimacy" and "romance," especially by elderly women. Arguments from Generation Z girls in focus groups, "let's take an unexpected (unwanted) pregnancy seriously," included humorous "I'll wear a wedding dress every day, even in the kitchen," as well as reasoned possibilities of a woman – "we earn big money for a nanny". Or other answers that emphasized the strong limits of the modern young woman, who, together with an informal husband, will manage and not lose their sense of dignity.

Our comparative study in the field of generational psychology was also focused on identifying gender similarities and differences in perceptions of the character of desired or necessary professional work and issues in labor activity and career development of young specialists, especially women. The main motivation for choosing a profession with a higher degree of university education among young women was related to expectations from work – both intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction from work. Typically, the future possibility of a high salary and various external benefits played an important role in women's motivation to work, especially for those with preschool-aged children. Similar arguments of external motivation to work were approved by half of the surveyed girls, whereas arguments such as "mom, grandmother will help" were practically disapproved of, instead, the emphasis was on the fact that the salary must cover all necessary expenses for caring for young children including hired nannies. In mixed-gender groups of students, there were no gender differences in the arguments about the importance of earnings for independently solving the problems of a young family and work.

In contrast to the youth, women of the baby boomer generation, in arguing their reasons for a woman choosing a profession and workplace (mostly based on their own life example or life experience), emphasized the importance of a woman's satisfaction not by her internal aspects such as self-actualization or career growth, but by external factors such as flexibility of working hours, choosing a workplace close to family home and school for children, etc. Generation Z young women mostly ignored this factor.

Moreover, the preference for the factor of high pay and career growth was the main basic argument for excluding traditional bipolar gender roles in household management. That is if, for baby boomer women, the evaluation of the traditional woman's role of a wife, mother, and housewife was closely related to high homemaker craftsmanship (cooking food at least to delight the family with unexpected delicacies, etc.), for Generation Z girls, similar arguments were met with great skepticism and even sarcasm, implying that a variety of individual and family needs should be provided by respective culinary specialists for money, as available social services instead of additionally exhausting women with more work.

The ideal gender role of a homemaker was a priority gender role for the mother, wife, grandmother, and sometimes grandfather for the baby boomer generation, and absolutely not important for future family roles for both genders of Generation Z. Moreover, in discussing marriage and young family issues, about 30-40% of student focus group participants and 0% from the older generation criticized the old gender tradition of waiting and receiving a marriage proposal from their male partners in the case of heterosexual love. This is quite a high percentage of Generation Z believed that the decision to create a family through marriage should come from both genders simultaneously as part of a joint discussion. A low percentage of girls (about 20%) believe that giving an engagement ring is necessary, and up to 20% consider it discrimination against boys who give a ring without receiving a gift in return. Support for giving an engagement ring was argued with the fact of informing close ones (relatives and friends) about future plans.

Full consensus from almost 100% of both genders of Generation Z showed support for the European practice of receiving partial parental leave for young parents (for both her and him) who are caring for a newborn child and can stay on this leave regardless of the parent's genders if necessary and logical for the family functioning. This will also be financially productive for a young couple where the mother is a single parent. Therefore, the greatest cognitive gender dissonance we observed was between the digital generation (Generation Z) and the so-called “digitally blind” older generation, which was at the time of the survey at the age of grandchildren's grandparents.

Only a small percentage of young women believe that there is a tendency for highly educated, upper-middle-class women to be full-time mothers for small children. Even after graduating from a prestigious college and with high-earning husbands, whose salaries could allow them to choose. On the question of the possibility of parental leave for child care, these girls expressed arguments that men are more competent in male-dominated professions and women in female-dominated professions, where less money is paid.

Innovative research in gender psychology and sociology has emerged under the influence of feminist movements, providing important empirical data that has become a part of the discipline of gender psychology as a science of the mechanisms of gender socialization, assimilation of gender stereotypes, and practices of gender behavior in traditional and egalitarian relationships. Gender Display – The concept of gender display was introduced into the academic discourse by Erving Goffman. It refers to the culturally determined and socially conditioned diversity of gender expressions at the level of interpersonal communication; it is a primary mechanism for creating gender during face-to-face interactions. Interpersonal communication in any given situation is always accompanied by the process of categorization by sex. The very possibility of categorizing an individual by sex is the foundation of communicative trust. People are assigned a gender based on various information that adheres to conventional rules. Name, appearance, voice timbre, language patterns, movements, and styles of expressing emotions – all these multiple expressions constitute a gender display, allowing the identification of the interlocutor as either male or female [11; 13; 15].

Typical programs of gender psychology deal with the acquisition of gender identity and its dysphoria, sexually typical mental disorders, universalization of sexual reactions, and statistical distribution of sexual orientations in the population, etc. These and other psychological concepts, such as different types of sexism and their use in the mass consciousness, serve as an important factor in monitoring public statements of politicians on the democratization of gender

principles of politics and ideology. In turn, new gender disciplines have emerged in higher education institutions, such as women's studies, men's studies, sociology of gender, gender education of children of different ages, etc. However, has this spread of gender scientific knowledge affected the mass gender culture, reduced the role of gender stereotypes in the policies of countries, or at least shifted the gender consciousness of the younger generation of students? Has the practice of eroticizing the female body as an indirect object of consumerist harassment or the masculinization of male psychology through the imposition of male body muscles as a necessary condition for achieving authenticity of male identity disappeared from the content of mass media advertising? Far from it, gender psychological realities exist on their own in the departments of psychology and gender studies, but students-psychologists, lawyers, or future businessmen take them only for credits and do not follow them in life as progressive guidelines for gender behavior. That is, there is a significant gap between the latest or already classical knowledge of gender psychology and its implementation in the real life of young people and adults or even women's movements [3; 4; 7].

What should be the way of transforming psychological, sociological or political gender postulates into mass psychology? Only through testing at the individual or group level in the process of pedagogical training. It is no coincidence that feminist pedagogy as education, training and upbringing emerged simultaneously with various gender innovations. Feminist pedagogy, which is developing in educational theories in different parts of the world, can effectively promote the work of various gender studies, not only psychological, but also from different disciplines – sociology, medicine, and even gender pharmacology.

This is the only way to simultaneously reproduce the content of classical gender postulates and their practical significance for the sake of positive social and personal changes. That is, this form of education simultaneously popularizes gender knowledge and shows the usefulness of its implementation in the practice of life not as an abstract theory but as a challenge to outdated practices. It is not for nothing that feminist pedagogy is sometimes called “radical,” “critical,” “pedagogy of resistance,” and even “troubling education.”

For example, in many departments of psychology and women's studies at universities, feminist pedagogy has developed a focus on what to teach and, above all, how to teach. The motivation of feminist pedagogy is to promote the content of the gender idea, and its implementation in the lives of young people for the sake of shifts in traditional gender consciousness. That is why feminist educators emphasize the relationship between education and social transformation, which classical gender psychology is not able to provide.

A good illustration of this pattern is the widely practiced experience of teaching students to study different types of gender behavior and identify their own type according to the popular Sandra Bem's test. Theoretical knowledge on the topic introduces students to the existence of such classical varieties as androgynous (based on both high rates of typically female and male qualities, as well as separately or masculine, or feminine, or indistinct). In psychology, the type of androgynous behavior is glorified as the most effective, universal for men and women who have the greatest ability to adapt to different life circumstances, unlike other types of gender behavior. Does working with the test motivate students to work on themselves, to reflect on their own ability to show more flexibility in their own behavior, activating, for example, a lack of masculinity or vice versa femininity? What is a student to do if, according to the declared psychological knowledge, only up to 30% of students of both sexes fall into the group of the

most productive androgynous individuals? And if he or she has a different type of gender behavior? According to feminist pedagogy, the only way out is a radical change in the paradigm of student-teacher didactic interaction. That is, within the framework of gender psychology, the declared knowledge is not focused on its application in practice, only in theory. Such knowledge is not aimed at developing flexibility, adapting student's gender behavior to different life circumstances and, therefore, is not a learning task. That is, psychological knowledge of gender is required from students at the level of reproducing its definition, and not as an approbation of action, influence on real behavior. It is feminist studies that can activate the issue of the meaning of gender knowledge, activate situationally relevant individual experience, problem-oriented teaching methods, and the exchange of experience through dialogue.

Feminist pedagogies focus on activating the subjectivity of the student in the system of subject-subject learning, as opposed to the subject-object interaction of teacher and student in education, practicing instead of dogmatic illustrations such as “proven,” “established” that is, the use of heuristic, problem-based learning methods in didactics in the form of case studies or focus groups, mini-discussions, testing design ideas for changing the use of gender in real life practice. That is, without rejecting the explanatory and illustrative method of teaching to understand the essence of the issue and its reproduction, the main focus of feminist pedagogy remains on a personally oriented gender paradigm, regardless of the student's gender.

It is based on the principles that personal decisions can be made only in the process of self-development. That is why the dominant principles of the practice include the introduction of personal stories, pluralism of discussions, rejection of the only correct answer and recipe, education for critical consciousness, pluralism of discourse, search for the most rational individual models of behavior and attitudes, problem-oriented rather than recipe-ready answers, reproductive knowledge for compromise of bipolar views, giving value to the individual point of view, giving “the right to vote” to everyone without exception.

Activation of the subjective point of view, and respect for the diversity of individual experience viewed through the prism of gender becomes the basis for understanding the basis of theories of social equality and justice, regardless of whether the student is androgynous or not always productive feminine or masculine gender behavior.

The use of gender knowledge from various scientific disciplines in the process of feminist pedagogy, the subject-subject approach to knowledge transfer and its formation by moving from mentoring to partnership, inclusive audience involvement, interactivity, cooperation, contextuality and dialogue education in respect of multiculturalism is the only way to real social change in the gender consciousness of young people.

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**Centrul Editorial-Poligrafic al Universității Pedagogice de Stat „Ion Creangă” din Chișinău,
str. Ion Creangă, nr. 1, MD-2069**